

**Communicating customer empowerment strategies to non-participants:
An investigation of the mechanisms and conditions impacting the affective reactions toward the
brand and the brand relationship.**

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New technology development, like Web 2.0, allow easy and fast exchanges between consumers and firms. Consumers also display a desire for “empowerment”, i.e. having a greater role in exchanges with companies. Then, more and more firms develop platforms to empowering them to take a more active role in innovation.

Over the past decade, the customer empowerment strategies have especially been studied from the angle of participating consumers. The first research focusing on the consumers not participating was only published in 2011 and showed positive effects on non-participating consumers’ perceptions and behavioural intentions.

Through the lens of communication and persuasion, this doctoral research moves beyond the “what” and ask “how” and “when”, i.e which mechanisms and conditions impact the non-participants’ affective reactions toward the brands that communicate their customer empowerment strategies for new products. After an exploratory stage, we plan to manipulate for the influence of the source attractiveness, proximity and credibility. Next, similarities with greenwashing will be studied, especially when a brand displays customer orientation for its innovations only, with regards to other parts of its business.

This dissertation ultimately aims at helping companies decide if it’s worth advertising their customer empowerment strategies and how to best benefit from it.

Keywords: Customer empowerment, new products innovation, consumer integration, persuasion, affective reactions

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